

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 DODE-00 PA-01
/067 W

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P R 150900Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2928

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 2567

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM PINT BC SF

SUBJ: DETENTION OF ANGLICAN DEAN MICHAEL MOLALE

REF: GABORONE 2538 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DEAN MICHAEL MOLALE, ANGLICAN DEAN OF BOTSWANA AND ACTING HEAD OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN BOTSWANA DURING BISHOP MALLORY'S ABSENCE (TO ATTEND THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE), CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AND DCM AUG 11 TO EXPRESS HIS APPRECIATION FOR US INTEREST DURING HIS RECENT DETENTION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF BRINGING CHARGES AGAINST THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (SEPTELS). DURING HIS CALL, DEAN MOLALE DESCRIBED AT LENGTH THE EVENTS PRIOR TO AND DURING HIS DETENTION. AT THE RISK OF REPORTING THE OBVIOUS, MOLALE'S EXPERIENCE IS REPORTED IN SOME DETAIL FOR THE POSSIBLE INSIGHTS IT MIGHT PROVIDE INTO COVERT SAG OBJECTIVES AND
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METHODS. END SUMMARY.

2. MOLALE SAID HIS FLIGHT TO JOHANNESBURG JULY 26 HAD BEEN UNEVENTFUL; HE HAD EATEN LUNCH AT JAN SMUTS AIRPORT AND GONE TO THE INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURE LOUNGE WHEN HIS FLIGHT TO TRANSKEI (UMTATA) HAD BEEN CALLED. WHEN THEY BEGAN BOARDING, HE WENT WITH HIS PASSPORT AND BOARDING PASS TO

IMMIGRATION CONTROL AT WHICH POINT A SECURITY MAN APPREHENDED HIM. HE WAS TAKEN HANDCUFFED TO JOHN VORSTER SQUARE IN DOWNTOWN JOHANNESBURG AND TO THE TENTH FLOOR OF THE NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS, IN THE PART OF THE BUILDING (7TH-10TH FLOORS) OCCUPIED BY THE BUREAU OF STATE SECURITY (BOSS). MOLALE WAS ALLOWED TO KEEP ONLY HIS BIBLE AS READING MATERIAL WHICH WAS USELESS SINCE THE LIGHT IN HIS CELL WAS TOO POOR FOR READING. HIS BELT, SHOELACES AND EYEGLASSES WERE TAKEN FROM HIM, AS WELL AS HIS BRIEFCASE. (ALL OF HIS PERSONAL PROPERTY WAS RETURNED TO HIM UPON RELEASE.) HE WAS STRIPPED AND THOROUGHLY SEARCHED AT LEAST THREE TIMES. HE WAS TAKEN, STILL HANDCUFFED, TO THE DETENTION CELLS ON A LOWER FLOOR, WHERE THE HANDCUFFS WERE FINALLY REMOVED. DURING THE FOLLOWING 13 DAYS HIS ROUTINE APPARENTLY VARIED LITTLE.: HE WAS INTERROGATED EACH DAY FROM 8 IN THE MORNING UNTIL 5 IN THE AFTERNOON BY SUCCESSIVE SHIFTS OF THREE INTERROGATORS EACH. THE INTERROGATORS, HE SAID, WERE SELECT INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN EXTRACTING THE MAXIMUM INFORMATION CONCERNING THE ACTIVITIES OF VARIOUS SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEE AND NATIONALIST GROUPS (ANC, PAC AND BPC) IN BOTSWANA. HE WAS CONFRONTED BY FAT DOSSIERS CONTAINING PHOTOSTATS OF CORRESPONDENCE HE HAS SENT AND RECEIVED FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, AS WELL AS DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF HIS ACTIVITIES WITH, AND FOR, THE REFUGEES IN BOTSWANA. FROM THE INTIMATE AND RECENT DETAIL OF THE LATTER INFORMATION, DEAN MOLALE DEDUCED THAT THERE MUST BE ONE OR MORE BOSS INFORMERS PLACED WITHIN THE REFUGEE

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GROUPS WITH WHICH HE HAS WORKED. IN AN ASIDE, DEAN MOLALE DENIED AFFILIATION WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY OR NATIONALIST GROUP, SAYING HE WAS INTERESTED PRINCIPALLY IN ORGANIZING HOUSING FOR THE REFUGEES AND IN ENCOURAGING ORGANIZATIONS TO CEASE INTERNECINE STRIFE AND DISHARMONY. (HE NOTED ONE AGREED PRINCIPLE OF ALL WAS NEED FOR ARMED STRUGGLE.) HE CHARACTERIZED HIS INTERROGATORS AS "POLITE BUT SARCASTIC", AND SAID THAT THEY OBVIOUSLY WERE PSYCHOLOGICALLY EXPLOITING THE FACT THAT THE DETAINEE WAS HELD INCOMMUNICADO AND IN ISOLATION.

3. MOLALE SAID HIS DAY BEGAN WITH A WASH-UP PERIOD WHEN HE WAS SENT TO BATHE IN A TUB USED BY OTHER DETAINEES. AT THAT TIME HE WAS ABLE TO ENGAGE IN SOME LIMITED COMMUNICATION WITH THE 30 OR 40 OTHER DETAINEES, ALL BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 21, WHO WERE HELD IN THE SAME CELL BLOCK. SINCE THESE WERE ALL BLACK YOUTHS, HE SURMISED THAT THERE MAY EXIST A SIMILAR CELL BLOCK USED FOR PRISONERS OF OTHER RACES. MOLALE, WHO HIMSELF IS A RELATIVELY YOUNG MAN (PERHAPS IN HIS LATE 30'S), CHUCKLED WHEN RECALLING THAT THE OTHER DETAINEES ADDRESSED HIM AS "OLD MAN" AND ASKED WHY HE WAS ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES WHICH HAD LANDED HIM IN THE HANDS OF BOSS. THEY SAID THAT THEY WOULD LIVE TO SEE THE ATTAINMENT OF FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA,

BUT THAT HE WAS PROBABLY TOO OLD TO SEE THE RESULTS OF HIS STRUGGLE.

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4. MOLALE WAS KEPT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT DURING HIS ENTIRE INCARCERATION. HE HAD NO BED, BUT WAS GIVEN A BLANKET ON WHICH TO LIE ON THE FLOOR. EACH HOUR DURING THE NIGHT A WARDER WOULD BANG ON THE STEEL DOOR AND ENTER MOLALE'S CELL TO ASSURE HE WAS THERE, WHICH MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO GET MORE THAN A FITFULL SLEEP. THE FOOD HE WAS GIVEN WAS APPARENTLY ADEQUATE, ALTHOUGH OF POOR QUALITY AND FAR FROM APPETIZING. IT WAS SHOVED AT HIM THROUGH A SMALL TRAP IN THE STEEL DOOR. BREAKFAST CONSISTED OF WEAK TEA AND FOUR SLICES OF TOAST THINLY LAYERED WITH MARMELADE; DISHWATERY VEGETABLE SOUP AT NOON; AND MEALY RICE OVERLAYERED SPARSELY WITH MINCE (CHOPPED BEEF) FOR SUPPER. MOLALE COULD NOT SAY WHETHER OTHER DETAINEES ENJOYED SIMILAR FARE. HE DID EXPRESS THE FEELING THAT HE WAS GIVEN UNUSUALLY GOOD TREATMENT, SINCE HE NOTED THE BRUTALITY WITH WHICH OTHER PRISONERS WERE TREATED. AT NO TIME WAS MOLALE PHYSICALLY MISTREATED, OTHER THAN BY BEING SUBJECTED TO LONG AND EXHAUSTING INTER-
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ROGATIONS AND POOR SLEEPING CONDITIONS AT NIGHT. HE SAID THAT MANY OF THE OTHER DETAINEES HAD BEEN HELD (UNDER THE TERRORISM ACT) FOR A YEAR OR MORE AND SOME HAD CLEARLY BROKEN UNDER THE SUBHUMAN CONDITIONS; THOSE INDIVIDUALS WERE BY NOW CLEARLY DERANGED, HE ADDED.

5. MOLALE SAID THAT, JUDGING FROM THE SIZE OF THE DOSSIERS ARRAYED AGAINST HIM HE HAD ABANDONED HOPE OF RELEASE IN LESS THAN ONE YEAR. HE, THEREFORE, FEELS CERTAIN THAT INTERVENTION BY HIS FAMILY, THE PRESS, AND THE US AND GOB GOVERNMENTS, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS BEING LET GO AUGUST 7. HE UNDERSTOOD BBC GOT ONTO THE STORY EARLY. MONDAY AUGUST 7 HE WAS CALLED AS USUAL TO THE 10TH FLOOR WHERE HE FOUND THAT THE RELEASE FORM HAD ALREADY BEEN SIGNED. HE WAS SIMPLY TAKEN OUT OF THE BUILDING AND SET FREE. HE HEADED IMMEDIATELY FOR THE ANGLICAN CHURCH HEADQUARTERS, LOCATED ONLY A HALF BLOCK AWAY, WHERE HE ASKED FOR IMMEDIATE RETURN TO BOTSWANA EITHER BY SCHEDULED FLIGHT OR CHARTER, AND SOMEONE TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE AIRPORT.

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